

October 24, 1963

John,

Last week I visited [redacted] president of a small consulting company called [redacted]

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Ted is negotiating with [redacted] to perform analysis of Russian articles in his scientific field. He has become interested in language statistics and has thought of a way to evaluate relative technical progress in a given technical field of Russia and U.S.

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He finds that as a technical field progresses, new words are used to describe the new ideas. These words are key words and the frequency of their usage in technical publications is an indicator of the intensity and extent of interest and activity along certain lines.

By measuring the statistical distribution in time of key word usage in the technical literature of a country, a time lag or lead can be determined by correlating the distribution with that of the U.S.

This should be relatively straightforward for unclassified subjects like brain surgery, agricultural research, etc. The more difficult aspect is in trying to apply weighting factors for classified work. If the iceberg is 9/10 below the water, one must be careful in drawing conclusions from measurements of the 1/10 which is visible.

By careful statistical work, however, it should be possible to draw valid conclusions.

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Does this interest you?

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Negative

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